



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Warns Residents About Risk of Salmonella Infection from Baby Poultry

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health has linked four cases of salmonellosis to exposure to baby chicks, according to Alicia Lepp, epidemiologist with the Department of Health's Division of Disease Control.

The cases, all children younger than 10, are associated with a multi-state outbreak of salmonellosis being investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As of May 10, 2013, a total of 146 people from 26 states have been linked to this outbreak. Investigation findings have connected this outbreak to exposure to baby chicks, ducklings and other live baby poultry purchased from multiple feed stores and sourced from multiple mail order hatcheries.

“Contact with live poultry can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections,” Lepp said. “Even if chicks and ducklings appear healthy, they may be shedding salmonella. A bird that looks clean can still have germs on its feathers and feet that make a person sick.”

Symptoms of infection with salmonella include diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever, usually within eight to 72 hours after exposure. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most healthy people recover without antibiotic treatment. Infants, young children, the elderly and those who have impaired immune systems are at greater risk for severe infections.

The risk of acquiring salmonella infections from baby poultry can be reduced by following these guidelines:

- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam.
- Do not let children younger than five years of age, older adults, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch live poultry.

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- Do not snuggle or kiss the birds, touch your mouth, or eat or drink around live poultry.
- Do not let live poultry inside the house, especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served or stored.
- Do not give live baby poultry as gifts to young children. In at least two of the North Dakota cases, the chicks were given as gifts.

It is important for people to be aware that if they've had or are having diarrhea with fever and have had contact with chicks or ducklings, they should consult their healthcare provider.

For more information, call Alicia Lepp, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378 or visit www.ndhealth.gov/disease.

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